

REMARKS

Claims 1-27 are presented for examination, of which Claims 1, 5, 9, 13, 26, and 27 are in independent form. Claims 1, 2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, and 20-27 have been amended to define more clearly what Applicant regards as his invention. Favorable reconsideration is requested.

Claims 1-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. Re-37,031 E (*Nishiwaki*), in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,435,544 (*Mandel*).

As shown above, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1, 5, 9, 13, 26, and 27 in terms that more clearly define what he regards as his invention. Applicant submits that these amended independent claims, together with the remaining claims dependent thereon, are patentably distinct from the cited prior art for at least the following reasons.

The aspect of the present invention set forth in Claim 1 is a printing system in which a host device and a printer are connected via a communication medium, and a print job produced in the host device is transferred to the printer to execute printing. The printing system includes memory means, requisition means, retrieval means, and information means. Paper output place information, regarding the paper output place used in the print job, is registered in the memory means. The requisition means issues a request for paper output place information, enabling a user to specify a paper output place used in a designated print job according to an instruction from the user. The retrieval means retrieves the paper output place information for the designated print job from the memory means, and the information means conveys the paper output place information for the designated print job, obtained by the retrieval means, to the user, in response to issuance of the request by the requisition means. The information means inhibits informing the user of the paper output place information when a request is not issued from the requisition means.

Among other important features of Claim 1 are, that the requisition means issues a request for paper output place information, enabling a user to specify a paper output place used in a designated print job according to an instruction by the user, and that the information means informs the user of the paper output place information on the designated print job, obtained by the retrieval means, in response to the request by the requisition means. The information means also inhibits informing the user of the paper output place information when a request is not issued from the requisition means. That is, according to a user instruction, the requisition means issues a request for paper output place information, enabling a user to specify a paper output place used in a designated print job, and the information means informs the user of the paper output place information on the designated print job, obtained by the retrieval means, in response to the request by the requisition means. However, if the user does not desire paper output place information, the information means is inhibited from supplying the paper output place information to the user when a request is not issued by the requisition means. By virtue of these features, it is possible to prevent the inconvenience of information not desired by the user being automatically sent to the user based on a determination made by the printer. Accordingly, it is possible to reduce useless communication traffic by preventing needless data being exchanged in the printing system.

The Office Action on page 3 specifically concedes that *Nishiwaki* fails to teach the requisition means of claim 1. Accordingly, claim 1 is patentable over *Nishiwaki*, taken alone.

The Office Action, however, takes the position that it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention to modify the printing system of *Nishiwaki* with the multibin mailbox system of *Mandel*.

Mandel is not seen to add anything that would overcome the deficiencies of *Nishiwaki*. In particular, *Mandel* merely relates to a printer mailbox system in which individual

users' print jobs are automatically variably directed into particular electronically assigned print job storage mailbox bins, where some of the mailbox bins are locked. Column 15, lines 37-41, of *Mandel* discusses the process depicted in Figure 6 of allocating print jobs to respective mailbox bins, so that, when a job is printed, the controller decides which mailbox bin the print job should be discharged. As depicted in Figure 5, internal data exchange is conducted between the CPU of the mailbox/finisher and the ESS of the finisher. In other words, the *Mandel* process is performed based on a judgement of the controller (CPU of the mailbox/finisher depicted in Figure 5), not the individual user specifying the paper output place.

Furthermore, the *Mandel* system transmits, among other things, information prompting a user to remove a printed job from a mailbox bin, increasing needless data being exchanged in the printing system. This additional communication traffic decreases the efficiency and productivity of the entire printing system.

Nothing has been found in *Mandel* that would teach or suggest the information means inhibiting informing the user of the paper output place information when a request is not issued from the requisition means, as recited in claim 1.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 1 is clearly allowable over *Nishiwaki* and *Mandel*, taken separately or in any possible combination (if any).

Independent claims 5 and 9 are method and computer-readable memory medium claims, respectively, corresponding to system claim 1, and are believed to be patentable for at least the same reasons as discussed above in connection with claim 1. Additionally, independent claims 13, 26, and 27 include a similar feature as that discussed above in connection with claim 1. Accordingly, claims 13, 26, and 27 are believed to be patentable for reasons substantially similar to those discussed above in connection with claim 1.

The other rejected claims in this application depend from one or another of the independent claims discussed above, and, therefore, are submitted to be patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, individual reconsideration of the patentability of each claim on its own merits is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration and early passage to issue of the present application.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our New York Office by telephone at (212) 218-2100. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,


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